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# NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release:**

Friday, June 2, 2000

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## **Health Department Issues Warning, Sick Birds Found at Local Pet Store**

The Monroe County Health Department issued a warning today that several birds at the Tri City Pet Center, 2157 Penfield Road (in Wegmans Plaza) were found to have psittacosis, an acute bacterial respiratory tract infection. It is not known if any birds sold from the store are infected. The disease can be transmitted to other birds and to humans.

Residents who purchased a bird from the Tri-City Pet Center between April 22-May 21 should have the bird tested by a veterinarian and discuss the need for antibiotic treatment both of the bird purchased from the store, and other birds that they own that could have become exposed.

Customers who entered the bird room, a glass-enclosed portion of the store, are thought to be at low-risk for contracting the illness. They should, however, be alert for symptoms (noted below). If symptoms develop, they should immediately contact their physician and notify the Monroe County Health Department at 274-6079. Customers who merely visited the general pet store area are not thought to be at-risk.

Psittacosis is an infectious disease that can be transmitted to humans from birds. It can be spread by inhaling dust from dried bird droppings and by handling infected birds. Waste material can remain infectious for weeks. Symptoms, which usually occur 1-4 weeks after exposure, include fever, headache, chills, and sometimes pneumonia. A persistent dry cough is often present. Although usually mild or moderate in character, human disease can sometimes be severe, especially in infants and older people. Antibiotic treatment is usually successful in both birds and humans. There have been two cases of human psittacosis in Monroe County during the last 10 years.

The infected birds were purchased by the pet store during the third week of April and subsequently became ill. Other exposed birds at the store during this time frame have been destroyed or are being treated. Store management has cooperated fully during this investigation and the store is open for business.

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For More Information,

Contact: John Ricci, 274.6106 or visit us on the web, [www.co.monroe.ny.us](http://www.co.monroe.ny.us)

